

A FORECAST OF THE NEXT WORLD WAR

WRITTEN FOR THE TRIBUNE BY HUDSON MAXIM

Illustration by Albert Levering



Hudson Maxim, who was first to present smokeless powder to the United States government for adoption. Also, the inventor of Maximite, first high explosive to be blown through armor plate and exploded on the other side

the body of a man, will result in certain death, and the vapor from one drop will surely be fatal. Possibly this is the same gas that was submitted to me. We mean by "gas" the vapor of the poisonous substance that produces the gas or vapor.

Mustard gas, so called, is not a gas; it is a liquid with a boiling point higher than that of water, but it dissolves in the air quite rapidly and the air impregnated with it is very deadly. Chlorine, however, is much more volatile. Chlorine is carried in cylinders in liquid form, and the instant that it is liberated it becomes gaseous, whereas mustard gas, or the liquid from which mustard gas is evolved, will remain in a liquid state for many hours. Some of the positions of the Allies attacked with mustard gas by the Germans were so saturated and covered by the Germans with that material that it is said that mustard gas actually ran down the gutters of village streets.

Is it possible that we have reached a stage of intellectual development and mechanical accomplishment that is going to be suicidal? Is it possible that the human race is going to turn all its wonderful instrumentalities of this great mechanical age to the destruction of humankind? Are the same instrumentalities which have lifted mankind out of barbarism to be employed to send him back to barbarism?

I have often, in lectures and writings, called attention to the fact that the human race has advanced more in everything that makes for human progress during the last hundred and fifty years than it had previously advanced in all the long drawn ages that had elapsed since man came out of the cave.

I am sixty-eight years of age and during my lifetime have been wrought three-quarters of all the accomplishments to which man today owes his elevated position. In terms of human progress, I was born more than half the way back to the cave man. Is it possible that I shall live to see the work of the past century and a half undone? I expect to live another twenty years, perhaps thirty. Is it possible that I shall live to see Mars undo all that the inventor and his inventions have done in 150 years for human betterment?

It is time for the nations to take counsel of one another—time to call an armament truce and to make serious inquiry as to whether or not there is some better use to which we can put our science and our inventions than mutual destruction.

The greatest menace to modern free institutions is the politician. The greatest menace to civilization is the politician. The greatest war-breeder in the world is the politician.

We have heard much of the man behind the gun. There is a man behind the man behind the gun—the politician, who is responsible for all the gun-fire.

The greatest menace to the welfare of the human race to-day is that child of corruption and opportunity, the politician who for personal advantage will stop at nothing under heaven or over hell.

It is all very well for us to advocate an armament truce and tribunals of international justice, but nothing worth while can be accomplished without a radical and sweeping reformation in our political methods. The first requisite is to secure honest administration of governments. This is a bigger task than to secure international justice, for justice, like charity, must begin at home. When a government can be administered with the practical economy with which large corporations are administered, then and not until then will there be hope of international stability based on international justice.

The Pied Piper of Browning's poem rid Hamelin town of its plague of rats. Science may bring the rats back for use in future warfare. Rats and mice, warns Hudson Maxim, will be infected with bubonic plague and let down from airplanes to spread contagion

smoke screen to cover the movements of ships at sea and armies on land. Smoke-screens were produced in this way on a large scale in the great war.

Four years before the Russo-Japanese war, in an article in The Home Magazine, a publication now dead, I foretold that there would be, in the near future, a war between Russia and Japan, and I prophesied that Japan would win, and gave my reasons why she would win. The war came, Japan was victorious, and for the reasons that I gave.

I now predict that in the next great war the airplane is going to play the most important part of all arms of naval and military service. It was formerly supposed that no nation would dare to use poisonous gases for fear of retaliation. For the same reason it is now believed by many that no nation would dare to spread germs of deadly diseases. History proves that in warfare any nation or people will resort to any expedient whatsoever that promises success—that promises victory.

In the next great war not only will the most deadly poisonous gases be spread broadcast over actual contending forces, both on land and sea, but also over inland cities. Not only will the actual fighters be attacked, but non-combatants also will be attacked. In the next great war we may look for the most disastrous and far-reaching results from the use

of the airplane as a sower of death and destruction.

Twenty years ago I predicted that the airplane, which is able to overgo all barriers, would place inland positions on the firing line. This was done to a large extent in the World War. Paris and London were bombarded and, had the war continued a little longer, Berlin would have been wiped off the map and its inhabitants destroyed. Vickers Sons & Maxim had built enormous airplanes, capable of carrying tons of poisonous gases, and they were

almost ready to begin the flight to Berlin for the destruction of that city when the armistice was signed.

In the next great war, we are going to see germs of the most deadly diseases sown broadcast by airplanes. We are going to see inland cities smothered in poisonous gases and tens of thousands of inhabitants, men, women and children killed in a few minutes.

Fleas and cooties or body lice will be infected with bubonic plague and typhus fever and other deadly ailments and sowed by billions

over the inhabitants of enemy countries. Rats and mice will be infected with bubonic plague and let down from airplanes to spread contagion. There will be no place that one may hide himself and be safe from attack. All non-combatants will be exposed to destruction, as the sinful, according to Revelation, are to be exposed on the Day of Judgment.

Bombs carrying from half a ton to a ton of high explosives can now be carried by airplanes and dropped with most disastrous results, either upon or about enemy warships, and upon enemy fortifications and enemy cities.

Warfare to-day has lost most of the old heroics of combat between man and man, with pistol and clanking sword. Present-day warfare is vicious work; it is murder, pure and simple. There is nothing glorious about it, for there can be nothing glorious in smothering with poisonous gasses a city full of women and children.

As chairman of the committee on ordnance and explosives of the Naval Consulting Board I had an opportunity during the war of examining more military and naval inventions than any one ever before was called upon to examine in the same time. Among the inventions submitted was a poisonous gas which the inventor claimed would be far more deadly than anything yet produced. I have lately seen in the press announcements that we have a poisonous gas three drops of which, striking

NO ONE-TRACK MIND IS MAXIM'S

By Arthur Chapman

AS a human paradox Hudson Maxim would delight G. K. Chesterton. The ordinary person pictures an inventor as a grimly intent sort of individual whose mind is on one thing alone. No doubt such a picture is truthful enough as a rule.

But Mr. Maxim, who is the inventor of high explosives, not to speak of numerous other things that have had a big part in modern warfare, is interested in poetry—so much

so that he has written a textbook on the subject.

He is a cook, along scientific lines. When you eat lunch at the Maxim home, perhaps part of the meal will be beans cooked by the inventor himself, though he has plenty of kitchen help at his command. He experiments in making jellies just as enthusiastically as he experiments in making some new chemical compound that may revolutionize warfare.

Mr. Maxim plays a strong game of tennis

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MORE than twenty years ago I predicted many things for aviation which, at that time, were thought rather fanciful and impracticable and, by some, impossible, but which have nevertheless been accomplished.

I have always been a staunch believer in the possibilities of aviation. Twenty years ago I predicted that the airplane in warfare would furnish the eyes of armies and navies. Until the advent of aviation, the chief problem of land fighting was to tell what the enemy was doing behind that hill. Now, the flying machine puts the entire battle-front under the eyes of the aerial forces of the contending armies and the game of war must be played like a game of chess, in the open and under the eyes of commanders of the contending forces.

I predicted that the airplane would make it necessary in future warfare, first to conquer the sky before success on land could be obtained. I predicted that the army able to command the sky would dominate the situation and render victory sure. I predicted that the airplane, which at that time could not be taken up in flight except in the quiet of the evening air, would be so developed that it could rise in a whirlwind and buffet a hurricane. These things have all been accomplished.

I predicted that aerial contestants would use the thunderhead to mask maneuvers. This seemed fanciful at the time, but it is an old story now. No one at that time dreamed that any one would ever dare to make a landing at a speed of eighty miles an hour—now such speed in landing is commonplace. I then predicted that in the not far distant future airplanes would successfully carry the mails from ocean to ocean and also across the ocean. We now know that these things are possible and we are looking forward hopefully to their practical accomplishment on a widely extended scale.

Twenty years ago I predicted the use of poisonous gases in war and claimed that in the next great war poisonous gases would be employed, notwithstanding the fact that they were then supposed to be prohibited by international agreement or understanding.

I predicted that torch bombs would be thrown upon the works of an enemy to illuminate them at night—that thing was done upon a large scale in the last war.

I predicted also the use of smoke-producing bombs on land and sea for producing a